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RHYMES

OF THE

RAIL

POEMS

by C. J. Byrne


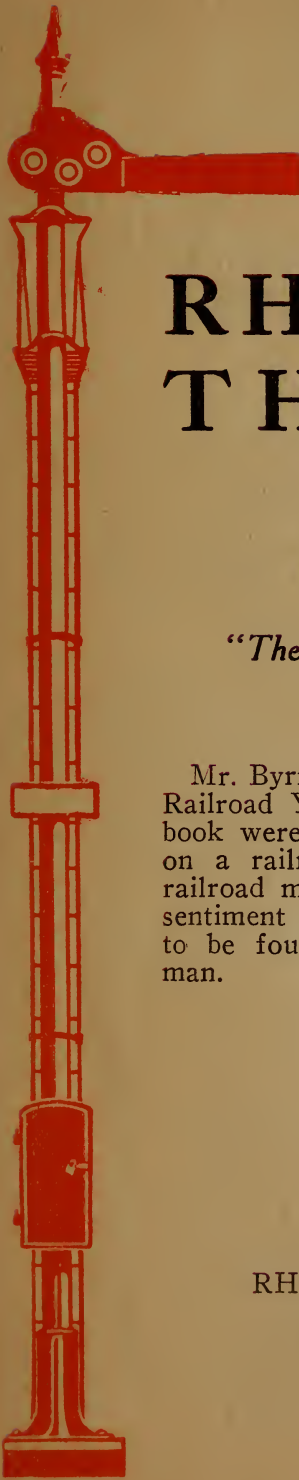


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RHYMES OF
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RHYMES OF THE RAIL

BY

C. J. BYRNE

"*The Poet of the Railroad Yards*"

Mr. Byrne is rightly called "The Poet of the Railroad Yards" for the rhymes in this little book were inspired by an active outdoor life on a railroad and we feel that every real railroad man will recognize the fact that the sentiment and humor in these little poems are to be found in the heart of every railroad man.

—THE PUBLISHERS.

Second Edition.

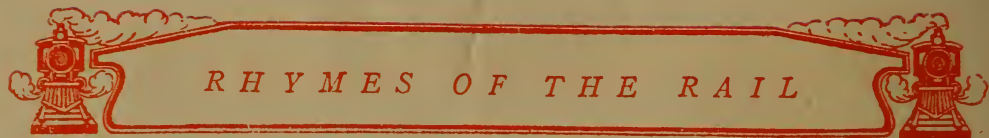
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BY

RHYMES OF THE RAIL CO.

St. Paul, Minn.





America First

(Written for the St. Paul Daily News.)

There are places I know, where I'd love to go,
There are things that I long to do;
There are times when my heart, with a longing to start,
Will ache, but I fight it through;
On the distant shores, where the cannon roars,
Perchance, I may long to be;
But I'll take my stand in Freedom's land—
America first for me!

There are deeds untold, in the world of old,
There are rumors and dark events;
And the facts unfold, till my blood runs cold
And my very soul resents;
And I bow my head for the countless dead,
As I pray upon bended knee,
To bless each grave, by Him who gave
America first to me.

Through the darkest night, it was freedom's light
That showed me the way to go;
I followed near and it led me here,
To the fairest land I know.
So I leave behind, all ties that bind,
To those beyond the sea;
And I'll take my stand in liberty's land—
America first for me!


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Tied Up for Rest



(Locomotive Fireman and Engineman's Magazine.)

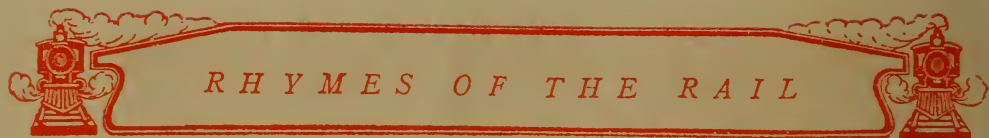


It was just at the close of a long, busy day,
An engine crew tied up for rest;
The fireman was soon fast asleep in the hay
With the engineer sharing his nest.
They had traveled together throughout the whole day
For they worked on the very same run;
Still the work that they did was nothing but play
And the railroad was built just for fun.

And Oh! what a railroad, built right in the sand,
With tracks running up to the lawn,
Revealing impressions of each little hand
That tied up the system at dawn.
There were bridges and tunnels, that ran away back,
A depot and round house complete,
With mountains surrounding a long passing track
Where fliers were ordered to meet.

As I studied the layout of each little track,
It seemed I had been there before;
Fond memories I cherished were calling me back
To bright golden hours of yore.
Back to my childhood in that happy land,
My heart overflowing with joy;
Back among playmates again in the sand,
A freckle-faced, barefooted boy!

Oh! could I but linger forever with you
And sleep in your snowy white bed;
And then I could tell you of hills that I knew
On the rough rocky road up ahead.
But another will guide you on life's right-of-way,
From the cradle wherein you were blest,
To the end of the line and the end of the day
When finally you tie up for rest.



RHYMES OF THE RAIL

Watching Out for Dad



(Written for the Railroad Man's Magazine.)



Beyond the train-yard limits there's a mile-board near the track,
And when by chance I pass that way, my thoughts go drifting back
To days gone by when that old sign meant, "Home, Sweet Home,
at last,"

And I whistled for the station with a long, familiar blast,
And as the echo died away my heart would fill with joy
For the message that it carried to a blue-eyed baby boy.
A mother, too, was happy as she kissed her little lad,
And held him near the window to watch and wait for dad.

The brightest hours of my life were spent upon that run,
When I whistled at the mile-board and the long day's work was
done;

And when my message failed to reach those anxious, childish ears,
His little heart grew heavy and his blue eyes filled with tears.
I often kissed away those tears and stroked his curly head
As he lay asleep, still sobbing, in his little trundle bed.
For I knew the disappointment that befell my little lad
When he failed to hear the whistle while he waited up for dad.

Upon life's weary highway there are mile-boards near the track;
We never pass the same one twice, we never double back.
And when I think of by-gone days 'tis then my heart grows sad;
My boy is now an engineer still watching out for dad.
And though he's just as dear to me as in those days apart,
His golden curls of childhood seem entwined about my heart.
And often, as I sit alone, another little lad
Says, "Hold me near the window, grandpa, while I watch for dad."



The Dead Engine



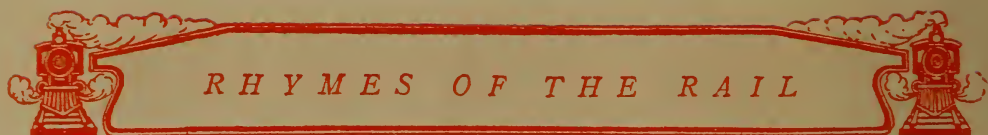
(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



Just back of the door, on the play-room floor,
With drivers shining bright,
An engine and train are blocking the main
And the yards are lonely tonight.
For every one of the crew has gone
And left it standing there,
On a long iron track that leads away back
To the round house under a chair.

A laughing boy, a mother's joy,
Has answered his Maker's call.
For he was the crew, the manager, too,
The brakeman, conductor and all.
But never more at the parlor door,
Will he whistle for "Sofa Grove"
As his train sweeps down and into the town
Behind the kitchen stove.

Quiet as a mouse, a lonesome house,
No laughing, noisy boy
To cheer our life, our grief and strife,
To fill our hearts with joy.
Your train is here, but you, my dear,
Our engineer of seven,
Will need no cars up in the stars
The "Great White Way" of Heaven.



When Sweeney Runs the Crew



Sweeney was a switchman whose daily work was hard;
A dandy fellow liked by all the boys down in the yard.
Sweeney had ambitions, as everybody knew,
To lay aside his brake stick and be foreman of a crew.

We called him "Mike the dandy" and the girls about the town
Would stroll across the bridges where the cars came rolling down,
To cast a smile down at him and whisper, "Ain't he grand?"
As he skipped along the box cars with his brake stick in his hand.

When Red O'Brine was married and O'Rourke was taken sick,
We had to have a foreman and we had to have one quick.
The G. Y. M. was at a loss to know just what to do,
For there was none among us that had ever run a crew.

We stood and watched the blackboard where our names appeared
each day
Like a small boy scans the scoreboard when the home team's far
away.

The yard boss looked us over, for the most of us were new
And then selected Sweeney as the foreman of our crew.

It was on a Sunday morning that our captain started in,
A bouquet in his button hole secured there by a pin.
A hard boiled shirt, a new stiff hat, a tie of every hue;
He looked more like a side show than the foreman of a crew.

We started in to pull the rip, we set the freight house, too.
Our captain gave a washout sign and broke the train in two.
'Twas here he got excited as the hind end started back
And threw a switch between the cars and put them off the track.

The yard was blocked from end to end; the G. Y. M. was sore;
The only clear track in the yard was lower "number four."
We worked and tugged beneath the cars to put them on the track.
A brake beam caught in Sweeney's coat and ripped it up the back.



His new hard hat was busted in, a grease spot donned his tie;
His face was grim and dirty and a cinder filled his eye.
The call boy brought a message, aloud he read it through:
"Report tomorrow morning at my office with your crew."

There's a little switchman's shanty down at one end of the yard.
A three-throw switch to tend to and the work's not very hard,
An easy job not half the work and likewise half the pay;
'Tis here Michael Sweeney reigns forever and a day.



If I Could Look Through Your Blue Eyes



If I could look through your blue eyes, I wonder what I'd see?
'Tis true that I was once like you, a little lad of three.
But as you stand before me now, I wonder what surprise
Would greet me if I had a chance to look through your blue eyes.

Perhaps the little shoes you wear upon those tiny feet,
Could let a little toe peek out and still appear quite neat.
And then your little stockings could be whole or otherwise;
I'd never know the difference if I looked through your blue eyes.

The fields would all look fresh and green, the skies look brighter, too,
The birds, I know, would start to sing and all the world seem new.
I'd never see the sun go down, I'd only see it rise,
If I could only journey back and look through your blue eyes.

God bless your wondering, big blue eyes, a-gazing at me so,
Perhaps you're trying to figure out what daddy wants to know.
But I am trying just as hard to know what big surprise
Would greet me if I had a chance to look through your blue eyes.



The Jewels of My Watch



(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



While sailing away on the long mountain trail,
Up in the cab of the Overland Mail,
The hands of my watch softly steal round the dial,
From minute to minute and mile after mile.
It's just a plain watch with a big open face,
With twenty-one jewels, and a twenty-year case;
But the jewels I prize are the jewels of my life
Inside the back cover—my baby and wife.

Just an old-fashioned picture, faded and torn,
Its luster has gone and the edges are worn.
Through the long, dreary years that we've been apart,
I've kept that dear photograph close to my heart.
While sailing away on the long mountain trail,
Up in the cab of the Overland Mail.
As I gaze at my watch I fancy I see
The jewels of my heart, smiling sweetly at me.

The bright ruby lips of my baby so fair,
Are the jewels that are priceless, so precious and rare;
The sweet, sacred memory of mother and wife
Are jewels that I value more precious than life.
As the hands of my watch softly steal 'round the dial,
Inside the back cover a baby's sweet smile
Seems to lure me to sleep, and I wake with a start,
As I gaze at my watch and the jewels of my heart.



Up With the Fire Boy



Up where the smoke and the cinders are thickest,
Come, take a trip with me,

Up where the heart and the pulse travel quickest,
Come, for I want you to see,

Up where the steam dome sizzles and boils,

Up among coal dust, greases, and oils,

Up where the fire boy labors and toils,
Labors for you and for me.

Up where the light of the fire is glaring,
Over the engine and train,

Up with the men who are bravest and daring
Under an incessant strain.

Up where the coal pile is bulging the gate,

Up where you sweat, if you're five minutes late,

Up where your future is resting with fate,
Up in the fireman's domain.

Up where the sound of the whistle is screeching
Up at the head of the race,

Up where the glare of the headlight is reaching
Far ahead setting the pace.

Up where the heat of the fire would blind you,

Up where the grey dawn of morning will find you,

Up shoveling coal for the comforts behind you,
Up in the fire boy's place.

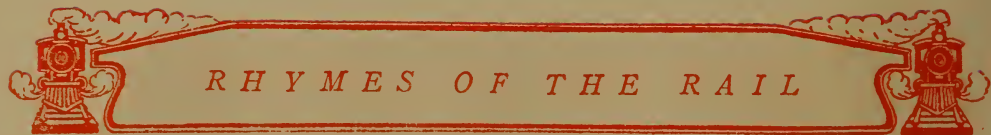
Up where the loved ones are with you in spirit,
Up where their prayers follow, too,

Up where there's danger, but you must not fear it,
Danger's no stranger to you.

Up where you may leave some one broken-hearted,

Up where the soul has so often departed,

Up to the keeping of God where it started,
Up with the brave and the true.



Boomer Tom




He worked upon the C. P. R.
He run train on the "Soo;"
We always called him "Boomer Tom,"
No other name we knew.
He got into some trouble there,
A time check then he drew;
And soon we heard that Boomer Tom
Was braking on the "Q."

"Bill Casey" was the name he used,
Upon the N. Y. C.
We heard that he was making good,
And happy as could be.
When to his record they referred,
They pulled him off his car.
They found why he had been let out
Upon the C. P. R.

The next place that he got a job,
Was on the W. C.
He couldn't shake the nickname off,
But still he felt quite free;
The C. P. R. bought up the road,
And Boomer Tom was found,
And next he landed on a job
Way out on Puget Sound.

He run upon the St. Paul road,
Likewise the Santa Fe,
The Denver and the Rio Grande,
Great Northern and N. P.
He worked out there on every line,
He shifted all about,
But everywhere this boomer went,
The Company found him out.

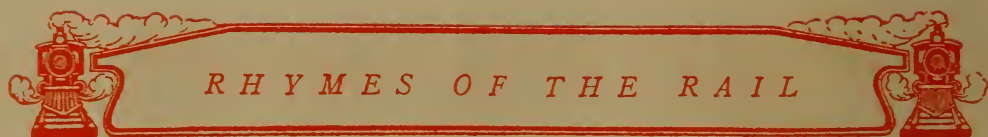


No matter how he changed his name,
It always would leak out,
For everyone knew Boomer Tom,
And Boomer Tom they'd shout.
He finally went across the line,
This time as Mike McLain,
The next day he was braking
For the C. P. R. again.

They pulled into the yard one night,
The fast mail train was due
And Tom was glad they made the town
Ahead of number two.
He strolled back to the red caboose,
He saw a headlight glare;
He heard a warning call for brakes,
Upon the still night air.

He soon discovered what was up,
Someone forgot the switch,
And number two was coming fast,
And soon would hit the ditch.
A dark form shot out on the track,
"I'll make that switch or die!"
The red light on the switch turned green,
The fast mail thundered by.

We hurried back toward the switch,
The engineer and all;
"I think we hit someone," he said,
"I saw somebody fall."
We found him there beside the track,
All signs of life were gone;
Our lanterns shining on his face,
The face of Boomer Tom.



Yardmaster for a Day




It was after dinner, half past one
And not a tap of work begun.
No wonder the "Yardletts" wore a frown;
The tracks all full, no engines down.
Ring up the phone and call the Tower
And ask them how about the power.
My arm is sore from ringing that bell,
I'll let the engines go to hell.

Now, don't get mad, John, don't you see
It looks like we are "up a tree;"
For number four is in the shed
And the engine on her is nearly dead.
Her helper is way out on the "Y,"
Trying to drop some coaches by.
The "up-hill" crew just telephoned down,
The coach yard engine is on the ground.

There's no one here to shove number nine,
No one to get those cars in line;
The freight house wants a switch or two,
And no engine here to shove the "Soo."
There's a drag on two we'll have to weigh
And a drag on one will have to stay;
With all this work my head will burst,
I know not what to tackle first.

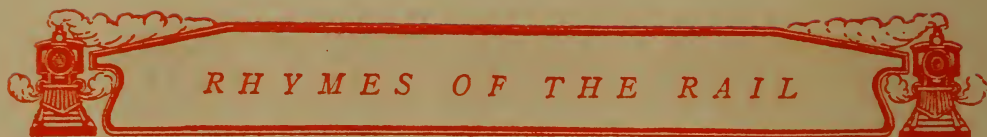
And here it is most three o'clock,
And all the switchmen on the "spot."
That round house is the worst I've seen,
They ought to look up Rule fourteen.
How can we keep the yard in shape?
When all the engines they are late.
The blowers howl, they seem to hum,
The round house put us on the bum.



The "Soo" comes in and fills a track
And says they've got to hurry back.
A transfer crew the Swamp track fills,
With forty cars and no weigh bills.
We'll put them on the transfer track
And make the buggers take them back.
The city engine is in the ditch
And all the coal yards want a switch.

Say, John, where is that car of stone?
And, John, who is that on the 'phone?
Say, John, is this car in the book?
For the love of Mike wait till I look.
Say, John, here comes the "forty-five,"
The fireman can't keep her alive.
The coal dock is ready and wants a pull,
And all the cinder cars are full.

Say, John, I heard the hay man say
That he had fourteen cars to weigh.
I wish that hay man would stay home
And just one day let me alone.
John, the round house is on the line,
They're sending down the nine-o-nine;
They've got the big ten forty-four
Just half way out the round house door.



A Pal of Long Ago



(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



Back in eighteen-eighty-three
You came on the job with me.
It was I who broke you in
Coupling cars with link and pin.
All the members of our crew
Seemed to think a lot of you,
More than you will ever know,
Dear old pal of long ago.

Every time we made a stop,
You and I got out on top;
Stations where the board was down
We would high-ball through the town.
Up ahead the engine crew
Kept a watchful eye on you.
Better days we'll never know,
Dear old pal of long ago.

Back in eighteen-ninety-eight
I was set up running freight,
I forgot a train was due,
I lost out and so did you.
Often times I think of it,
You were with me when they hit.
You were not to blame, I know,
Dear old pal of long ago.



Like myself you're growing dim
And upon your nickle rim,
In a sort of greenish tint,
Time has left its finger-print.
There is one thing that will last :
Recollections of the past
When our lives were all aglow,
Dear old pal of long ago.

Though your frame is badly bent
And you don't look worth a cent,
I would never part with you,
All that's left of our old crew ;
Through your rusty bars I see
Many memories dear to me.
That is why I prize you so,
My lamp—my pal of long ago.



The Crossing Bell



I stood alone one evening, where a road came winding down,
That led across a railroad, in a little Western town ;
And as the faithful watchman rang the quaint old crossing bell,
A sweet, familiar "something" seemed to hold me in a spell.

Each warning note from that old bell was music to my ears,
And memory led me back again to happy by-gone years.
I watched the "Twilight Limited" whizzing down the track,
I turned once more to go, but something seemed to call me back.

And then at last I realized the charm that held me there,
Still gazing at the watchman in his make-shift sort of chair ;
For in the days of long ago when twilight shadows fell,
I sat beside my dear old "dad" and rang the crossing bell.



The Rip-Track Boss



(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



I come here from North Dakota,
Just one year ago today,
For I hear in Minnesota
That a fellow gets more pay.
So I find me job on rip-track,
Fix the box car, make him new,
But I got no tools to work with—
So I don't know what can do.

First few days that I been working
They say, "Mr. Swan," and "please,
We like you to be the foreman,"
Just like I was the whole cheese.
Pretty soon they call me "Roundhead,"
But I tell them crazy fools
That I no can fix the box cars
If I no can have some tools.

"Swan," they say, "you fix that drawbar,"
So I look me on the bench,
All I find is broken hammer
And a rusty monkey-wrench.
When I ask them for some new ones,
"Well," they say, "you know the rules,"
But they think I make a box car
When I no have got some tools.

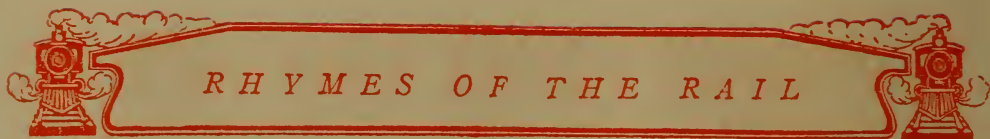


I have bolts too small for big holes,
I have nuts what no fit, too,
I steal one saw from the Wabash
And one crowbar from the Soo.
Then they say "I must make record,"
And I work my men like mules ;
But I no can make some record
If they no will buy some tools.

When I get some cars with flat wheels
Then I no can find some "jack,"
And they think a poor Swede fellow
Lift a box car with his back.
Then they call me "Mr. Roundhead,"
But, you bet, I tell them fools
That I'm going to quit my job now,
For they no will buy some tools.

I go back to North Dakota
Find me job on section crew,
Then I say, "You keep your job now ;
And I don't care what you do.
I am getting sick of rip-track,
I no like to work like mules—
Think a fellow make a box car
If he no can have some tools?"





RHYMES OF THE RAIL

Hurry Up-a Joe



I work-a very hard upon the big-a railroad track,
I lift the big-a tie and maybe sometimes break my back;
I fix-a very strong the joint, I watch-a every spike,
But have no much-a good-a time like big-a Pat and Mike.
They make-a plenty bluff like work, till big-a boss go way,
Then tell the big-a joke and laugh and all the time-a play;
But when the big-a boss come back, he tell to me "I'm slow,"
He get-a much-a mad and say, "Now hurry up-a, Joe."

The boss he got-a big-a pipe, he come to me and say,
"You nice-a man, I like you Joe, you got 'tobac' today?"
He make the big excuse to me, he take-a all my sack,
He give to me-a nice-a smile, then walk-a down the track.
No hurry up to big-a Pat, no hurry up at all,
But all the time-a wait for Joe to swing the big-a mall;
And when the wind begin to blow and pile the big-a snow
The big-a boss he all the time say, "Hurry up-a, Joe."

I work-a more than Pat and Mike but get no more-a pay.
I get so very much-a mad I maybe quit some day.
And then I take-a plenty time to find some good-a job,
Then get my pay and tell the boss, "You big-a Irish slob!"
But what's the use to quit my job and maybe find no more?
No job, no pay; no pay, no bread; no bread, my wife get sore.
No much-a difference what I do, no matter where I go,
Everybody shouts to me, "Now, hurry up-a, Joe."



I'm Off for the Golden West



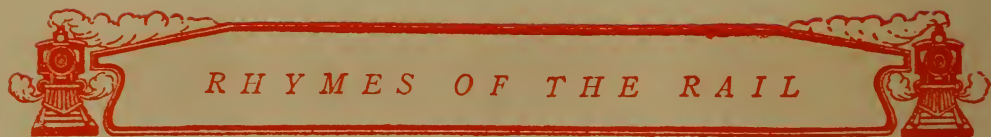
(Western Home Monthly—Canada.)



From Liberty's dome I'm going to roam,
For the rays of her guiding light
Stretch far and wide my path to guide
And keep my footsteps right;
So I'm going away and I'm going to stay
Just beyond the rocky crest,
Where fortune waits with open gates—
I'm off for the Golden West.

There's a welcome light o'er mountains bright,
With snow-capped towers beaming,
And far below the waters flow,
Sparkling pure and gleaming;
On the other side of the Great Divide
Where the sun goes down to rest,
And its fiery rays set the skies ablaze—
I'm off for the Golden West.

Where the big guns roar on Pacific's shore,
Where the "chinook" breezes blow;
Through the fruit trees grand in that orchard land
Where the big red apples grow;
Where the waters blue seem happy, too,
In that world away from the rest;
I would sooner be there than anywhere,—
In God's Great Golden West.



Billy, Ain't You Coming Out?



When the winter days are here
Memories greet me, memories dear.
That's the time I like the best,
When the wind blows from the West,
Shaking dead leaves from the trees;
Chasing out the honey bees
From their haunts of summer time.
Echoes of the Christmas time
Seem to ring upon the air;
With the snowflakes everywhere,
While they flurry all around,
Here and there, upon the ground;
When my schoolmate used to shout:
"Billie, ain't you coming out?"

How I love to stand and gaze
At the sort of wintry haze
As I cross the frozen field;
And to think that from its yield
Such good things we'll have to eat,
All this winter while the sleet
Rattles at the window pane,
Frosting it all up again.
But you bet it's lots of fun
Peeking through it at the sun,
When it gets up good and high
And the clouds all leave the sky;
Thought I heard somebody shout:
"Billie, ain't you coming out?"



When at night we gather near
Father's chair and mother dear,
Now my eyes fill, for I know
That those days of long ago
Are beyond on boyhood's shore,
And to me they'll nevermore
Enter in my life, but creep
In my dreams whene'er I sleep.
When the wind blows from the West,
And these memories with me rest,
Then the sun sets in my heart;
And I wake up with a start,
When I hear my schoolmates shout:
"Billie, ain't you coming out?"
(In Western Home Monthly—Canada.)



A Life on the Rail



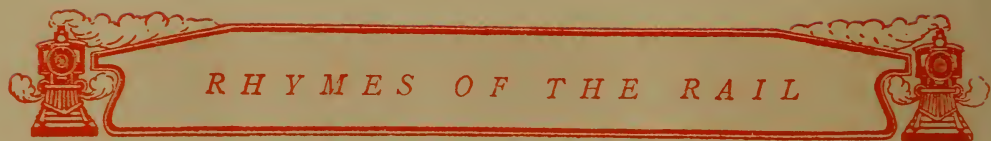
(Locomotive Fireman and Engineman's Magazine.)



There's a calling quite apart from all the other walks of life,
It's to work upon a railroad with its dangers and its strife,
Where the hand of friendship greets you every mile along the trail
And smiling faces meet you in a life upon the rail.

Where the commerce of a nation finds its way to other lands,
Intrusted to the carefulness of many different hands.
Where the drive-wheels of industry spin along the ballast trail,
Ambition knows no boundaries in a life up the rail.

Where the destiny of multitudes are often left to those
Who labor through the darkness while the world lies in repose,
Where creeds are all forgotten and clans are no avail,
Where fellow men are equal in a life upon the rail.



RHYMES OF THE RAIL

The Fruitful Golden West



I knew Jim when he was working
In an Eastern clothing store,
Just a common job of clerking,
Fifteen per, and nothing more.

Jim had reached the salary limit
Though the manager had said,
"With you, Jim, there's no one in it
And you're next to move ahead."

Jim was also very willing,
Happy as the day was long.
And with joy his heart was filling,
'Till the day his plans went wrong.

For the firm where Jim was working
Sold out to another store,
But he kept on, never shirking,
Though his pay was nothing more.

They put Jim at selling collars
By reductions that they made,
Said they'd keep him at twelve dollars
Through the dull months, if he stayed.

I knew Jim was broken hearted
But it all was for the best,
For that very night he started
For the fruitful Golden West.



Then I heard of Jim's employment
Soon as he got off the train,
And it gave me great enjoyment
Just to hear from him again.

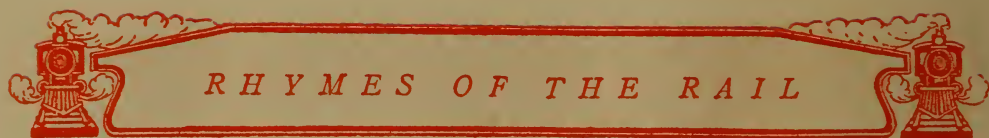
Told how he was feeling better,
Working outdoors every day
On a fruit ranch, and his letter
Told how he was going to stay.

Jim saved up a few hard dollars,—
Jim could save to beat the band,
Never saved it selling collars,—
Anyway, he bought some land.

It's three years ago or better,
Since my friend Jim went away;
Some months back he sent a letter
To come out with him and stay.

I went out there last September,
How he laughed to see me stare;
It's a sight I'll long remember,
Big red apples everywhere!

Talk about your plums and peaches,
Pears and grapes you call the best;
Why! You ought to see those orchards
In the "Fruitful Golden West!"



The Untouched Dinner Pail



The stormy night was over, the clouds had cleared away;
The Eastern skies grew brighter, bringing forth a new-born day;
The target lamps still burning, faded in the morning light;
The crews were now returning from their battle with the night;
The time freights now were rolling many miles upon their way,
Leaving night behind them, speeding onward through the day;
The sunbeams that were gleaming far along that iron trail
Were shining bright that morning on an untouched dinner pail.

The night had been a hard one for that little band of men;
I watched them turning homeward, something seemed to trouble
 them;
I bid them all good morning, for I met them all but one;
Their faces told, I need not ask, I knew what the night had done;
A place was vacant in the yard, a comrade met his fate,
Stepping in between the cars, but stepping out too late;
Within a little shanty, hanging high upon a nail
There's a switchman's cap and lantern and an untouched dinner pail.

There's a lonely little cabin over yonder on the hill,
A mother's joy has vanished, a voice she loved is still.
Who knows a mother's sorrow, who is it bears the load
Of time freights that are rolling far away upon the road?
How many trains arriving, or how many trains depart
Without a mother's sorrow or a loved one's aching heart!
We know not who will follow on that eternal trail,
Leaving us behind them and an untouched dinner pail.



The Switch Tender



(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)

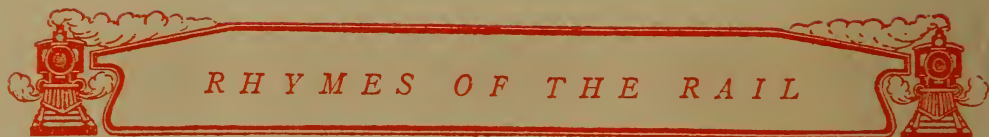


A little red shack built close to the track,
With a window in either end;
A little red door and ten feet of floor
And plenty of switches to tend;
A little old man with only one hand
And a little old pipe made of clay,
A little old smile from old "Erin's Isle,"
He's a happy old fellow all day.

In that little shack built close to the track
There are memories of by-gone years,
When youth and its prime was all summer-time
Now gone amid sorrow and tears;
When this little man with only one hand
In the days of the old "link and pin,"
While coupling up cars was caught in the bars
And the iron hand of Fate turned him in.

In that little shack turn life's pages back,
When youth to success looked ahead;
Since those balmy days the future's bright rays
Have changed like the hair on his head.
As he sits there tonight in the glare of the light
That shines through the little stove door,
You can easily trace, by the lines on his face,
The gladness and sadness of yore.

When you come along and the switches are wrong
And the lights all around you are red,
Don't shout and abuse, and curse and misuse;
Have respect for that weary grey head.
For this little man with only one hand
May soon pass away from your view,
And the iron hand of Fate may not hesitate
To make a switchtender of you.



The Old Ball Grounds



(Written for the Base Ball Magazine.)



I often sigh for the days gone by,
And I fancy I can see
The grassy plot on the vacant lot
Where the ball grounds used to be;
When the hour came to start the game
I sat in fond suspense
In a shady place beyond first base,
Inside the high-board fence.

There was lots of steam in the local team,
Of which we all were proud,
And the National game was far from tame
When the rivals brought their crowd.
How we used to shout when we struck them out,
And the feeling grew intense
When we tied the score in the days of yore
Inside that high-board fence.

You could always tell by the old town bell
When the home team won the day;
And the village band in the old grandstand
Began to loudly play.
And the noise they made in the big parade
Was enough to wake the dead;
But we didn't care, for our own town Mayor
Was marching up ahead.

I like to go to the big ball show
And root till my throat is sore,
And I love to shout when they strike them out
As I did in the days of yore.
Still I often sigh for the days gone by
In that village far away,
And the grassy plot on the vacant lot
Where the home team used to play.



Song Poem—"Boomer Tom"



(To the tune of "Casey Jones.")



Now listen while I tell you of an old-time rail
Who made a record run up on the "Santa Fe" trail.
Every boomer knew him from New York to Puget Sound,
He worked on every railroad and he traveled all around.
Everything behind him in the little red caboose
Was tied on with a rope so he couldn't jar it loose.
Every time he stopped to spot the water spout,
We had to go out flagging for he put the tail light out.

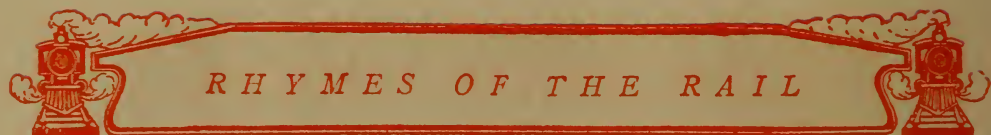
Chorus:—

Boomer Tom, everybody knew him.
Boomer Tom, some engineer was he.
Boomer Tom, you couldn't ride behind him.
He broke all the records on the "Santa Fe."

One night he got promoted to the merchandise run,
He was forty minutes late and in the face of number one.
The boiler it was leaking and the coal was nearly gone,
He had the blower howling and both injectors on.
He said to his fireman, "Now get up on my side,
Just keep her in the corner and the throttle open wide."
Then he took the shovel and threw in all the coal
And he had the engine poppin' at the top of the knoll.

Chorus:—

Boomer Tom, sixty miles an hour.
Boomer Tom, to the bottom of the fill.
Boomer Tom, into clear and taking water
And number one just coming at the top of the hill.



RHYMES OF THE RAIL

Childhood's Shore



(Western Home Monthly—Canada.)



I am gazing through the twilight
Of a day that's soon to close,
And the busy world around me
Seems to join me in repose;
I can see the golden sunshine
Of my youth now gone before,
And my playmates calling to me
Over there on Childhood's shore.

I am roaming through the woodland
Where the leaves are gold and brown,
I can hear the children singing,
"London Bridge is falling down;"
I can see their happy faces
As they played when school was o'er,
How my heart aches to be with them
Over there on Childhood's shore.

Now the twilight turns to darkness
And my eyes begin to fill,
As I gaze upon a cabin
Over yonder on the hill;
Where a loving voice is calling
As it called in days of yore,
The voice of my dear mother
Over there on Childhood's shore.

Yes, I'm gazing through the twilight
And the sun has died away,
My lonely heart is aching
And my hair has turned to grey,
I am dreaming of my childhood
That has gone forever more,
As I gaze across a lifetime
To the joys on Childhood's shore.



The Message I Read in the Tower



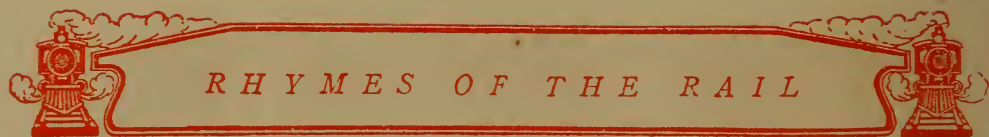
(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



In the dead of the night when the city is quiet
And the lights of the street die away;
When the stars twinkle high in the grey morning sky
And fade with dawning of day;
Where the switch lanterns gleam through the smoke
and the steam,
Where I sit and watch by the hour,
Each light that I see is a message to me,
A message I read in the tower.

There's a glimmer of steel, and sparks from the wheel;
An engine is slipping the rail.
Hear the jolting and jars, the bumping of cars,
As they struggle along the iron trail.
See the maze of red light, now green, and now white;
Hear the cinders beat down like a shower
And all this I see is a message to me,
A message I read from the tower.

Far out in the night, there's another bright light,
The Limited train drawing near;
Through the tangle of tracks, the bridges and shacks,
I keep a track open and clear.
For the loved ones asleep are safe, if I keep
My long faithful watch by the hour.
God grant that they may travel safe all the way,
Is the message I read in the tower.



RHYMES OF THE RAIL

The Ties That Bind



(Locomotive Fireman and Engineman's Magazine.)



Far across the lonely prairies there's a stretch of fertile land
And beyond the winding rivers there are clouds of desert sand;
Just beneath the snowy summits on the rugged mountain side,
The pine trees of the Rockies stretch across the "Great Divide;"
Far beyond the waving pine trees, once again the prairie land,
And across the level prairie, once again the desert sand;
Hill and dale are bound together, over rough and lonely trails,
By the ties upon the roadbed just beneath the shiny rails.

Arms outstretched across a nation forty hundred miles or more,
One stretched to the great Atlantic, one to old Pacific's shore;
From the coal fields of Alaska to the plains of Mexico,
Where industry finds an outlet, where mankind is prone to go;
From the cold and blinding snowstorms of a dreaded winter time
To the warm and balmy breezes of a sunny southern clime;
Many lands have been united, not alone by ships that sail,
But by ties that bind a railroad buried in the ballast trail.

Life is full of lonely prairies, rocky roads and desert sand,
And beyond the rugged highways there's a stretch of promised land;
Future hopes are ever sprouting up the weary mountain side
And we follow ever onward till we reach the "Great Divide."
Love and friendship form the roadbed leading through the joys and
 strife
From the happy land of childhood to the boundary line of life;
Cheerful words and deeds of kindness bind our hearts o'er lonely
 trails
Like the ties upon a railroad just beneath the shiny rails.



Safety First



(Written for The Railroad Man's Magazine.)



"As we journey through life, let us live by the way,"
A saying of old that applies well today;
There is nothing so sweet as life, after all,
So why take the chances that hasten "your call?"

You often save time by the "short cuts" you take,
But whenever you do, your life is at stake;
For, the time that you save would never repay
For the time you will lose if you "slip" on the way.

Very often the safety of others depends
On the judgment you use; it may be your friends,
Or the loved ones at home,—remember them, too;
Their future depends on the things that you do.

And this is a pretty good world after all;
There are times when your spirits may crumble and fall;
But there's never a time through the night or the day
When the chances you take are worth what you pay.

The "Safety First" way may seem longer and slow,
But it leads you past dangers you never may know;
So "now" is the time to look well ahead;
"Safety First" cannot help you after you're dead.



RHYMES OF THE RAIL

Flagging a Hold-Up



It was midnight on the Oklahoma prairies,
A rumble seemed to still the coyote's bark;
Across the plains where mankind seldom tarries
The night express came sailing through the dark.
A glare of light shot out across the tender,
The fireman reached for coal, but found instead
The presence of a stranger, tall and slender
And two six-shooters pointing at his head.

"Hands up! be quick!" the stern command is given;
"One crooked move and the both of you will drop."
The engineer who many years had driven
The night express, now brings it to a stop,
While others of the bandit mates are bringing
The balance of the train crew up ahead.
The flagman breaks, and runs while bullets, singing,
Are flying thick and fast about his head.

"A train behind," he calls and keeps on going;
"She's due and I am going back to flag."
The red light that he carried, brightly showing,
A target for the bandit men to bag.
"Stop!" shouts a voice, this time it's "Dead Shot Jim;"
A pistol cracks! and then a cry of pain;
They wing him, but he's up again! God bless him!
And on his way to stop the coming train.

Jim's pride was hurt, "I missed," they heard his grumble;
"One game darn fool," he shouts, and fires again;
And as he did a low and rolling rumble
Gave warning of a fast approaching train.
'Way down the track a red light told the story,
Still burning bright beside him where he fell;
A call for brakes—a flagman crowned with glory.
God bless the man who does his duty well.

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